Arrest of Infiltrators in Jammu and Kashmir

3070. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Security Forces foiled an infiltration bid by ultras under the shelling protection by Pakistani Rangers in Keran Sector in Jammu and Kashmir on 31st May;

(b) if so, how many such infiltrators, alongwith explosive materials were arrested and has any link with terrorist organisations been established; and

(c) the steps Government have taken to seal Indian borders to eliminate such attempts?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) There was moderate exchange of fire in Keran Sector on 30 and 31 May, 1998. One of the primary aims of Pak firing along the Line of Control (LOC) is to abet infiltration. However, there were no reports of any infiltration in this sector on 31 May, 1998.

(c) Due to the difficult nature of terrain and extensive length of the border it is not feasible to hermetically seal it. However, with the vigil maintained by the security forces along Line of Control, the attempts at infiltration at different places have been curbed to a great extent.

Barrels of T-72 Tanks

3071. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA':
DR. RANBIR SINGH:
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that barrels of 33 T-72 tanks have burst out while firing at different times;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any inquiry is being conducted in this regard; and

(d) if so, the responsibility fixed and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Incidence of barrel bursts up to November, 1997 was 33. Of these, 17 barrels were imported from the erstwhile USSR and 16 were of indigenous origin. The indigenous manufacture of barrels had been established in accordance with the technology regime of the collaborator and under the supervision of Russian specialists.

2. A Committee which included specialists of the Director General of Quality Assurance (DGQA), Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI), Ordanance Factory Board (OFB) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted investigations associating also Russian specialists. Failures have occured with use of both imported and indigenous ammunition. In the absence of any particular pattern of failure of barrels, no definitive conclusions could be drawn of the failures. It has emerged technical details regarding pressures and velocities within the barrel are necessary from the Russian side and that the ranges and tollerances that appertain in regard to the design, material, manufacturing processes and operation of these barrel need precise determiniation. This would need to be done by the Committee having regard to the relative ambience of operations in India and Russia. Meanwhile, maufacturing methods to increase the strength of the barrels have also been put on hand through indigenous innovation.

Reimbursement of House Rent to Defence Service Personnel

3072. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government employees have been paid House Rent Reimbursement (HRR) in case they arrange accommodation for themselves at

the station of posting; if so, the details of the scheme; and

(b) if so, whether such facility of HRR is not available to defence service personnel, unless the accommodation is directly leased to the department concerned; if so, the reasons for such disparity?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Defence civilian employees are not entitled for House Rent Reimbursement in case they arrange the accommodation for themselves at the station of posting. They are entitled to receive House Rent Allowance at the prescribed rates in case they are not provided with Government accommodation, as per general orders.

2. The Armed Forces officers who cannot be provided suitable accommodation can be permitted to hire houses or live in their own houses and in such cases they are allowed house rent reimbursement subject to the prescribed rent ceilling and other provisions contained in the departmental instructions. The Junior Commissioned Officers and other ranks can claim Compensation in Leiu of Quarters (CILQ) within the authorised married establishment if they have not been provided with Government owned or hired accommodation.

3. On the recommendations of Fifth Pay Commission, orders have also been issued for payment of house rent allowance to the Armed Forces personnel when accommodation under the existing arrangements cannot be provided and subject to certain other conditions. The house rent allowance admissible to them is on the scale as for civilian employees.

Dues to IAF from Ex-Prime Ministers

3073. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to newsitem captioned "Three ex-Prime Ministers owe Rs. 14 crores for using IAF planes" appearing in the Indian Express dated 12th June, 1998;

(b) the names of ex-Prime Ministers and the amount due for each;

(c) the steps Government propose to take to recover these amounts;

(d) whether Government charges any interest for late payment;

(e) if so, the rate charged; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Rs. 13.63 crores is outstanding against the former Prime Ministers as per details given below:—

	Rs.
Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi	1,86,17,280/-
Shri V.P. Singh	2,25,679/-
Shri Chandra Sekhar	5,91,31,476/-
Shri P.V. Narsimha Rao	5,52,40,647/-
Shri H.D. Deve Gowda	26,48,164/-
Shri I.K. Gujral	3,95,986/-

(c) The recoveries of the dues are being pursued with the Prime Minister's Office.

(d) to (f) There is no system of charging interest on the outstanding payments from the user agencies.

Firing By Pak Troops

3074. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of times Pakistani troops fired in the Jammu and Kashmir border during this year (month-wise);

(b) the number of innocent people in the border villages killed thereby;

(c) the steps being taken to check firing from across the border; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) Details of Pak firing on the border in